

STATE ROUTE 16: TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE PROJECT

**Tacoma Narrows Bridge Project
Nighttime Construction Noise
Quarterly Report: April – June 2003**

*Submitted on July 15, 2003 to:
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INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Tacoma Narrows Constructors have been issued a noise variance by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. The variance was issued for noise levels expected to result from construction work between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. in conjunction with the construction of the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The variance, valid through November 30, 2003, was issued with several conditions, including that WSDOT provide quarterly reports to the Health Department on activities relevant to the variance.

This is the second quarterly report and covers the period including April through June 2003. The following areas are addressed in this report:

?? Overview of Nighttime Construction Activities

?? Communication Activities

?? Complaint Response & Resolution

?? Upcoming Activities

?? Attachments

1. Nighttime construction activities
2. Public Mailings
3. Citizen Contacts & Complaints
4. Noise Readings

OVERVIEW OF NIGHTTIME CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES : APRIL - JUNE '03

Construction work took place on a total of 34 nights during the period including April, May, and June 2003. Nighttime construction work during this period took place both in the Narrows and along the SR 16 roadway on the Pierce County side of the Narrows, between 36th Street and the Narrows. Specific descriptions of the type, location, and times of this work are provided in Attachment 1.

During this period, one complaint was received as a result of a construction activity taking place between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Two additional complaints were received regarding noise from construction activities during daytime hours.

The majority of nighttime construction work during this period took place on the existing Tacoma Narrows Bridge as construction access walkways were installed.

This work required the closure of one lane of SR 16 and was therefore conducted during nighttime hours to avoid extensive traffic backups.

As described in the first quarterly report, the placement of concrete girders for the new 24th Street bridge took place on the night of May 31 to June 1. This activity was conducted during nighttime hours due to the requirement to temporarily halt traffic on SR 16 while the girders are placed. All six girders were set in one shift by conducting an eight-hour total closure of SR 16. Traffic was detoured onto local roads during this temporary closure.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

> INFORMATION & HOT LINE

A telephone information and “hot” line continues to be operational providing information about upcoming nighttime construction activities. It also provides residents an opportunity to communicate at any time of day with a live person about questions and/or concerns relating to the project nighttime construction activities and noise. This service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The phone number is 253-620-4440.

Nighttime construction activity information is provided in a recorded message, updated on a daily basis to provide the most current information. Messages can also be left on the information line concerning the nighttime construction activities and these messages will be responded to within 24 hours (on project working days).

Residents can also communicate directly with a person who can provide relevant information about project nighttime construction activities, accept comments, and if appropriate, directly contact WSDOT project staff. When project construction activities are taking place, the person staffing the “hot line” is able to immediately contact WSDOT project staff and to relay comments/complaints received. If requested by the caller, WSDOT project staff will return the call as soon as feasible.

> WEBSITE

To maximize public access to timely information about nighttime construction activities, a section of the project’s web site is dedicated to providing quick, easy access to information concerning nighttime construction activities. Information on this web site is updated daily to provide the most current information.

Comments and concerns about the nighttime construction activities can be submitted to project staff through the web site and will be responded to within 24 hours (on project working days).

> POSTAL CARRIER ROUTE MAILINGS

As described in the Communication Plan for Nighttime Construction Noise, information sheets have been delivered by postal carrier routes to residences and businesses in and surrounding the project corridor.

Prior to each calendar month, residents along the project corridor have been mailed notification flyers about nighttime work activities scheduled to take place throughout the upcoming month.

If activities scheduled and described in the monthly notification change, residents located in the specific geographic area (work zone) of nighttime construction work have been mailed an updated notification of rescheduled activities. Updated flyers have been mailed four times during this period.

Copies of the notification flyers distributed to date are provided in Attachment 2.

COMPLAINT RESPONSE & RESOLUTION

During this quarter (April – June '03), WSDOT received one complaint attributable to noise from a project construction activity occurring between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

WSDOT received two complaints regarding noise from construction or construction related activities occurring during daytime hours.

The Construction Noise Database entry sheets from these contacts are included in Attachment 3.

Activity between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

At 5:43 a.m. on June 13, 2003 a backhoe was started adjacent to the Narrows Creek Townhomes as part of a utility relocation activity. Later that morning, a complaint was received by the WSDOT TNB Project Office from Barry Bede, a resident of building "J" in the Narrows Creek Townhomes.

This work activity was addressed with Tacoma Narrows Constructors and the shift start time adjusted to 7:00 a.m.

Activities between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

The activities resulting in the following contacts are not subject to the TNB project's noise variance, and are exempt from the decibel limitations in the Tacoma-Pierce

County Noise Ordinance. They will be described here so as to provide a comprehensive report.

1. On May 12, 2003 a contact was received through the “Information and Hot Line” regarding noise from the project site taking place Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. No actual construction activities were underway on the project site during these times.

In a follow-up contact with the caller, WSDOT project staff determined that the probable source of the noise was a generator running on a construction barge anchored in the Narrows.

2. During the week of June 23rd, a resident of building “J” in the Narrows Creek Townhomes, Barry Bede, visited the WSDOT TNB Project Office. He inquired about limitations on daytime construction noise immediately adjacent to his building. Specifically, Mr. Bede was addressing daytime construction activities occurring within 50 feet of his residence. While acknowledging the need for the construction activities, he presented that the immediate proximity of the construction activities, including noise, was very invasive and was seeking appropriate mitigation.

The four unit building including Mr. Bede’s residence, building “J,” is the closest building in the Narrows Creek development to the TNB construction site. The only building closer to SR 16 and the Narrows Bridge, building “K,” was actually in the footprint of the project. It was acquired by WSDOT, and demolished. Two drawings are provided in Attachment 3 showing the location of these buildings relevant to the project site.

In follow-up to Mr. Bede’s inquiry the following was determined.

The final footprint of the widened SR 16 corridor will not impact building “J” or preclude its continued occupancy. However, the construction activities necessary to build the project require work in the immediate proximity of building “J.” For this reason, WSDOT acquired a construction easement from the owner of the Narrows Creek Townhomes up to within approximately 20 feet of building “J.” The construction work being addressed by Mr. Bede was occurring in this easement area.

This acquisition is in condemnation proceedings due to the inability of WSDOT and the property owner to agree on the amount of compensation. In order to allow construction to proceed, WSDOT and the property owner reached a settlement to allow “possession and use” of the areas to be acquired. The condemnation process will determine the final compensation amount.

As part of the “possession and use” settlement agreement between WSDOT and the owner of the Narrows Creek Townhomes it was agreed that the proximity of construction activities in the construction easement would possibly prevent leasing of the units in building “J” for a period of up to two years. As a result, a portion of the “possession and use” settlement compensation was determined based on two years of lease for the four units in building “J.”

This information was provided to Mr. Bede. Mr. Bede’s conclusion was that WSDOT already had provided notable mitigation for these construction impacts in the form of paying advance “damages.” This included compensation to the property owner equivalent to two years of lease for the four units in building “J.”

Subsequent to receiving this information, Mr. Bede intended to address the issue with the landlord and also was investigating if he qualified for relocation benefits from WSDOT.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

During the upcoming quarter, July through September ’03, construction activities will be taking place throughout the project site from Jackson Avenue to the vicinity of 36th Street.

Work is starting on the Tacoma side of the Narrows on the SR 16 mainline roadways. Temporary grading and paving will be conducted to enable shifting of traffic lanes around construction work zones. This work requires the temporary closure of lanes of traffic on SR 16 and will, therefore, result in construction activities during nighttime hours to reduce traffic backups on SR 16.

Work activities in the Narrows will be increasing with the new bridge caissons (tower foundations) that will be towed to the project site during July and August. Preparation for the caissons is continuing including dredging, anchor installation, and placement of rip-rap armoring on the bottom of the Narrows. The Tacoma-side caisson is scheduled to be towed to the project site July 21. The Pierce County-side caisson is scheduled to be towed to the project site in late August. As a result of both tidal effects and necessary production rates, this work will be conducted using two daily work shifts. This will result in construction activities during nighttime hours.

With the arrival of the caissons at the Narrows project site, concrete production will begin at the temporary batch plant. The majority of concrete production will take place between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., but some pours will continue outside those hours as defined in the noise variance.